

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 34, Number 1

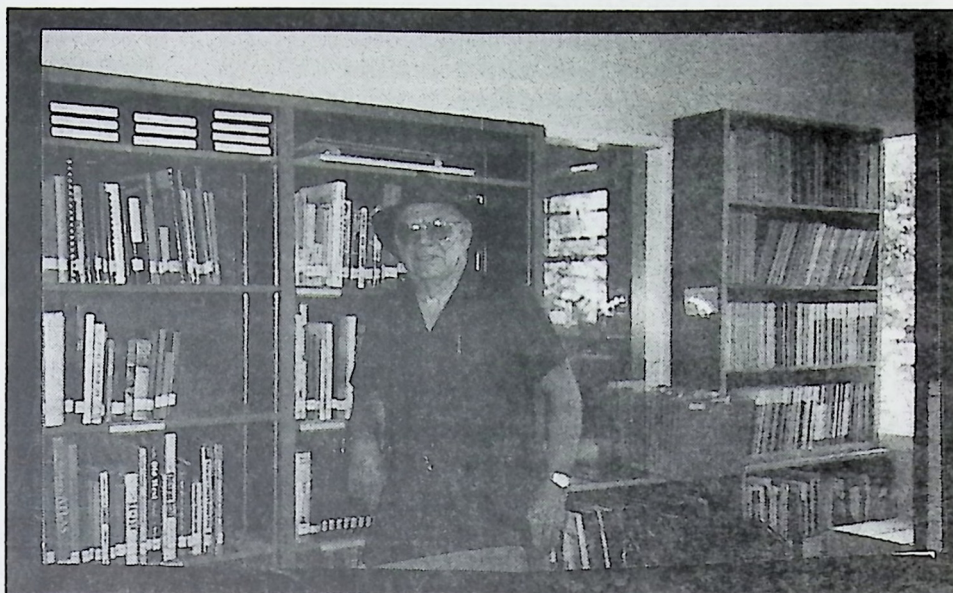
The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

March 1999

We Have a Date

MARCH

- **All Month.** The *Mondays Make History* column of the *Daily Courier* will feature ongoing stories about the local treasures of Josephine County.
- **All Month.** Artifacts significant for their special meaning in Josephine County history will be on display at the 6th Street entrance window at **Evergreen Federal Savings and Loan**. The 7th Street window display will feature the continuing saga of the Schmidt Family history.
- **Thursdays at 9:30 p.m.** Cable Channel 22's BLTV will feature "Josephine Journals," interviews by Bernie Martin Beck with people from the community who have treasures to show and tell.
- **March 11 & 12.** The Oregon Historical Society will share its dramatic exhibition, "The AT&T Treasures of Oregon." At the JCHS' Research Library parking lot from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free to all ages to see this "Museum on Wheels."
- **March 11.** A "Women's History Tea" will be held at **2 p.m.** in the Research Library's Bookshop featuring the newly reprinted works of Edna May Hill.
- **March 12.** Tom Nash of SOU's Dept. of English will combine history with folklore in, "Gouge Eye, Lemiti and Noti: The Colorful Stories Behind Oregon Place-Names." **2 p.m.** at the Schmidt House. Admission is free to all ages, sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities.



President Mel Shaw relaxes in the Research Library

A Message from the President. . . *by Mel Shaw*

We who are involved with the Josephine County Historical Society are convinced of its value to the community. We are dedicated to improving and maintaining its Research Library and Schmidt House Museum. Both are valuable resources for both research and education in the community.

Financially, we are always on the edge; it is absolutely necessary that additional revenues be generated. Due to the Society's financial position, the JCHS' Board of Directors is taking a hard look at making the Schmidt House and its barn self-supporting. Ways to accomplish this without compromising the historical integrity of the buildings is currently being considered.

One proposal is to have both the downstairs area of the house, as well as the barn, available to rent. Individuals or groups could rent these facilities for weddings, meetings, etc. To manage this, we are considering hiring, on a commissioned basis, an Events Coordinator who would work under the supervision of the Board on how best to protect the historical furnishings and exhibits of the Schmidt House.

If adopted, this proposal will require a business-like approach. Funds will be necessary for start up expenses, and none are budgeted. A garage sale has been suggested, so start saving your rummage; also, save your beverage cans for us to redeem. Another idea includes each Society member contributing one dollar (\$1.00) and bringing it by the Research Library.

These ideas may provide the money needed to start the Schmidt House and its barn on the way to becoming self-sufficient. If you have any ideas and would like to help us, please phone the Society at 479-7827. Volunteers at the Society will be able to direct you to the appropriate person to speak with, or will let you know when the committee meetings will be held.

Letters to the Editor

JCHS:

Thank you so very much for your generous contribution to the Anne G. Basker Auditorium Project. It is only through your generosity and that of others like you that this project has been made possible.

We miss Anne and her activism in this community. She cannot be replaced by a building named for her. We who have been involved in the effort of raising funds for the auditorium renovation hope, however, that some of those who will use the facility will be inspired to serve this community with vigor and vision as Anne did for so many years.

Sally Spalding
Project Committee

Mike Oaks:

We very much appreciate the time you took for the wonderful presentation at the lodging meeting.

Thank you so very much.

Mike Schofield
Grants Pass Lodging Assoc.

Victorian Carolers:

Thanks for coming downtown and sharing your talents with the community for the "Downtown Festival of Lights." The music made it a special evening and everyone enjoyed it.

Pat Sheets
Towne Center Assoc. Executive Director

JCHS Members:

A huge thank you to all of you wonderful people who so generously contributed baked goods and yummys to our Christmas Bazaar. Everything was so beautifully presented and obviously prepared with much love. I am so very appreciative to everyone who helped make our sale such a success.

Kerry Mitchell
Volunteer Chair

THE OLDTIMER

is the newsletter of the
Josephine County Historical Society
512 SW 5th Street, Grants Pass, OR 97526
(541) 479-7827

Annual dues are \$15.00 and include
a subscription.

Lee Ann Tardieu --Editor

Quarterly circulation of THE OLDTIMER is 650.
The publishing committee also produces
an annual historical publication,
mailed free of charge to
all members of the society.

JCHS Volunteers:

I wish to express a special THANK YOU to all of you who donated extra time and effort in the re-printing of *Josephine County Historical Highlights*.

Thanks to your efforts, the two volumes are now completed and selling. So, **THANK YOU!**

Kerry Mitchell, who manned the phones and made 1999's file folders, and gave extra days of her time.

Margaret Shaw, who sorted pages and pages and donated extra days to the project.

Mel Shaw, who made special trips to Copy Masters to keep the copy machine in toner.

Jan Lane, who sorted pages and gave precious extra hours of time.

Jan Collins, who sorted and stacked pages and pages and came in extra days to volunteer for this project.

You are all just **GREAT!!! THANK YOU!**

Marge Potter
Bookshop Director

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Three Reprints for Re-Reading

by Janet Lane

The latest project of the JCHS has been the reprinting of three classic books on local history which have been long out of print. There has been great demand for these books, and we are grateful to Marge Potter, Bookshop Chair, for undertaking the task of producing these books, now available for purchase from the JCHS Book Shop.

Josephine County Historical Highlights - Edna May Hill, \$14.95

Fondly remembered by many, Edna May first compiled *Highlights* in 1976 through a grant to the Josephine County Library from the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of Oregon. This project was published by the Society and was meant to be a representative sampling of the history of Josephine County "...to instill in the reader the desire to read further." Edna May Hill, a library employee and member of the Society, used her own broad knowledge of local history, along with interviews and research, to put together an interesting overview of our local past. The many pictures from the Society's photograph collection, make for fascinating browsing.

The book presents a topical, rather than chronological approach, to local history. Some of the chapters feature place names in the area, gold mining, Rogue Indians, the C & OC Railroad, floods and weather, schools, sheriffs and other public figures, and interesting biographies of some early pioneers.

Josephine County Historical Highlights II - Edna May Hill, \$14.95

In 1979, Edna May continued the story of Josephine County. The work had to be selective, but includes many intriguing stories from the files of the *Grants Pass Courier*. Have you ever wondered why the streets of Grants Pass have that interesting jog? Have you heard of the famous "Gladiolus Festival and Parade? Do you know the history of the Golden Rule store? Did you know that the County Airport from 1928 to 1959 was located in Lawnridge Heights in the northwest part of town?

Sailor's Diggings - Willard and Elsie Street, \$6.95

This small volume tells the story of the beginnings of Waldo, the largest town in the area in 1855. Waldo was the first county seat when Josephine County was established in 1856.

In 1973 the Streets first printed this book on their own hand-operated printing press, with all type handset by Elsie. After years of exploring the old mining towns in the area in their jeep, and researching newspapers and documents, they produced this interesting look into life in the small mining towns of Josephine County so long ago. Names like Allen Gulch, French Flat, Brown City and Butcher Gulch, are mixed with more familiar Waldo, O'Brien and Takilma. Extensive footnotes explain and debunk many stories of early beginnings. This guidebook will lead anyone on a fascinating journey through our area and into the past.

Letters to the Editor, cont. from p. 2

Rose Scott:

Enclosed is my recently published book *Crosscut Saw Reflections in the Pacific Northwest*. You are a contributor, so please add this book to your museum library.

Getting this book into print is one of my greatest accomplishments. It reflects 50 years of being around crosscut saws and the people who know about crosscut saws and a few very valuable contributors, such as yourself, who contributed to the quality of my book.

Please take a moment and read page 218, in Acknowledgments. Thanks again.

Jim Deaton

"...and surely a rose in Southern Oregon, there is **Rose Scott** of the JCHS, Grants Pass, who always gives credit to her peers and not herself, for orchestrating a well-organized research that disclosed some very valuable information."

Ross N. Roe
President

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History at the Center

cows. According to Twogood's diary, the two youngest boys died in August, contrary to what the Rogue Indian War history says. After arriving in the spring of 1855, Mr. Haines built a log house and planted an apple tree; however, the Haines family would not survive to see the apple tree grow to maturity and produce apples. On that fateful day of October 9, 1855, the father and son were killed by Indians and the mother and daughter were taken away and never heard from again.

Jimmie Twogood and three others were the first on the scene and he related the following, "The boy with the top of his head gone was just inside the door, his father was laying on his back on the floor with his head on a pillow and feet up on the hearth with a bullet hole in his chest, dead." He did not mention anyone being scalped as some writings have.

Shortly after finding the father and son dead, Jimmie and the three men with him were preparing to bury Mr. Haines and his son when a company of volunteers and regular troops showed up. The troops took over the burial tasks while Jimmie and his friends followed the tracks of the Indians and the captured Mrs. Haines and her daughter. They eventually found the Indian camp near present day Hugo. Although no Indians were present, they found 20 abandoned campfires. Jimmie stated in another document that the fate of Mrs. Haines and daughter was never learned. The Haines' apple tree is the only reminder of this

ill-fated family 140 years ago. Over the years, the tree grew to maturity with little or no care until someone or some group built a fence around it and erected a small white sign stating, "This tree was planted in 1852 by F. Haines, who, with his entire family, was later massacred by the Indians." The 1852 date is incorrect and should read 1855.

When the original fence and sign rotted down, the JCHS erected a second fence and larger sign. In 1992 an even newer fence and sign were needed. The apple tree required some tender loving care. Marilyn Luttrell took on the task of raising money, getting donated materials such as shrubbery and flower bulbs and volunteer labor to once again preserve this historic site. A flagpole was made and donated by former Oregon State Senator Deb Potts, and an American flag was donated by former Oregon State Representative Bill Markham. On April 16, 1993 the site was rededicated.

Diary Treasures: In December 1879, Samuel B. Pettengill came to old Leland at Grave Creek Crossing and established himself in business as a merchant, printer, rancher, miner, hostler, farmer, trapper, woodsman and postmaster. He plied his various trades until his demise at the age of 90 on January 25, 1922.

A fastidious gentleman, he kept a daily diary of his years in the Grave Creek Valley. Unfortunately, some of the diaries were lost, but the remaining diaries, now on display at the Applegate Trail Interpretive Center in Sunny Valley, establish people in certain places, link

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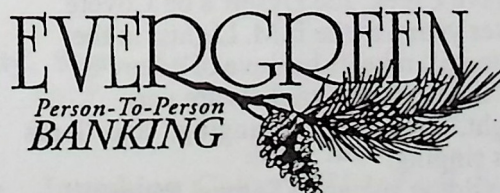
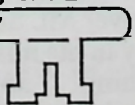
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History at the Center, cont.

events with places and people who were involved, and help to separate fact from fiction passed down over the years. The diaries cover the years 1880-82, 1895 and 1902-June of 1906. He recorded his registered letters in a volume from 1882 to 1894. Mr. Pettengill told of the people with whom he came into contact, what tasks he performed daily, what the weather was daily, times of the stage arrivals and departures from the north and the south, and who had meals with him and spent the night in his lodgings.

His diaries indicate that he was a tireless individual, who grew huge gardens and preserved its harvests as capably as any housewife of the time. He harvested timber for his buildings, whipsawed the lumber, cut stove wood, fence posts, shakes for roofing and siding. In addition to these everyday chores, he delivered goods to various mines and families, bought and bartered commodities from the local farmers, and prepared meals for his guests when he was not attending to customers. He relates having to perform two days labor on the roads with other locals to pay his share of the road assessment (road tax).

Samuel's mode of travel was almost exclusively on foot and in the winter his umbrella was a foil against the elements. In 1889, after assuming the position of postmaster, he traveled over the mountains to Wolf Creek daily with the mail. He would walk across the mountains to the Gravel Pit (present day Hugo) and catch the train to Grants Pass. If the train for his return was not on schedule, he would proceed undaunted to walk home from Grants Pass, thereby being able to attend to things and not waste time in waiting. This minor inconvenience would take about 4-1/2 hours.

"Wed. 25 I went to Leland in a.m. and rode home with S. Alderson with my goods, got home about 12:30 p.m., beautiful cool nice day, some fog and cloudy in a.m., busy around house in p.m. opening goods, etc. S. Alderson to dinner--J.A. Hopkins staid and took care of things, store, etc. while I went to Riddle."

He relates going to dances at the homes of Harkness on Grave Creek, Joe Dysert's on Coyote Creek and in later years, to the E.M. Lights' in the valley. Mr. Pettengill reveals his love of nature by such entries as "the frogs and crickets are very melodious tonight," "the larks are singing," and "larks and small doves singing."

Very little would be known of Samuel Pettengill and many others had he not faithfully chronicled the happenings in his daily life. We are grateful he set his pen in hand to record the events of his daily existence.

Carved Treasure: Jim Ford, a retired Grants Pass logger and brother of Bill Ford, ex-County Commissioner, donated a hand-carved Indian head and bust approximately 30 inches tall and 20 inches in diameter to be displayed in the Sunny Valley Radio Park Museum. This carving is now in storage until the completion of the museum project. The carving is not only unique, but also historical since it was made in Josephine County for the largest fraternal organization in Grants Pass at that time.

In excellent shape after 100 odd years, this treasure is unique and unusual as it was carved from a tree stump that had healed over, making the top roundish. The stump was cut off along the stage road on Sexton Mountain in about 1892 and hauled to Grants Pass.

There was a metal plaque on the back of the Indian head which had all the information on it, but the plaque was removed for safekeeping and is not available at this time to obtain the correct information from it. This plaque stated who carved it and the year it was carved. I remember that it was a leading businessman of Grants Pass, but do not recall his name. The carving has a metal bracket on top of the head that holds a single bit axe with the raised letters "WOW" on the top of the axe head.

When the carving was completed, it was presented to the Woodsmen of the World Fraternity, a lodge in Grants Pass. In 1903 the WOW was the third largest in the world, and Oregon had the largest membership of any state in the country. Grants Pass had the only daily paper published in Oregon under the title of the *Daily Woodsman Wedge*.

• The Finance Committee has been without a Chairperson for 1998 and we are starting 1999 absent this important person again! No wonder our finances are in the red! Do we have a member out there with some \$\$\$ savvy who can lead us into the black? Call the office and volunteer: 479-7827.

• The Executive Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the barn behind the Schmidt House. The at-large directors meet with the Executive Committee four times a year in February, May, August and October. Members of the Society are welcome to attend any of the board meetings.

• Roger Ramsey, who appeared as miner Joe Dysert at our recent Christmas program at the Methodist Church, had a change of clothing (hiking boots, Oregon State sweatshirt, and Superior Helicopter ballcap) with him in a paper bag. Because he had to get over Mt. Sexton before the bad weather, he left early in his miner's outfit, forgetting his change of clothing. If anyone found the bag of clothes, please bring it into the research library for Roger.

Pay Off the Debt

Editor:

With reference to Director Bob Lane's article in the December newsletter, I believe he is totally right. I'm delighted to see that someone is interested and concerned about the remaining balance which exists on the property purchase.

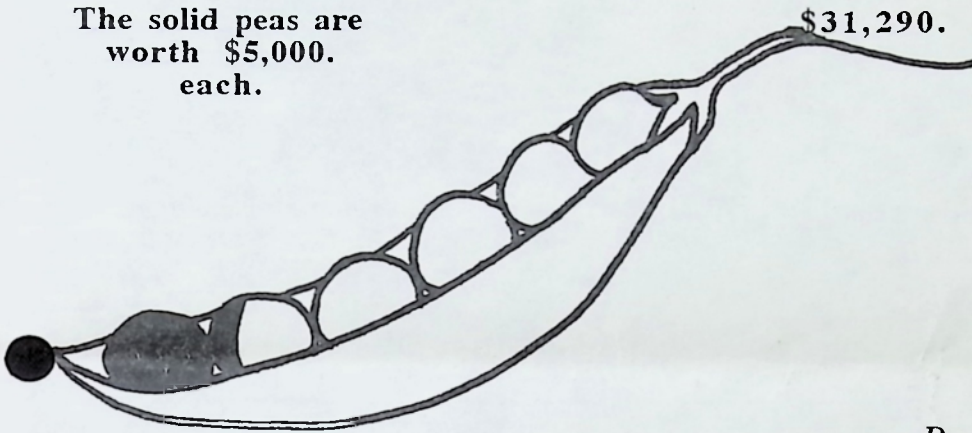
I would hope that in the future we could have a report on how the Society is progressing at regular intervals. Perhaps a simple chart, similar to a thermometer, could be used to show how much the funds are rising toward the goal and could be published in **THE OLDTIMER**.

Amy Hendrickson
JCHS Honorary Member

Amy:

Your wish is my command! I hope you approve.

The solid peas are
worth \$5,000.
each.



By the generous contributions received,
our daily interest decreased from \$6.16 to \$4.93.

THANK YOU!

The following members have made donations or pledged to help pay off the property debt:

Judy Boling

Dawne E. Fox

Dorothy Francis

Amy L. Hendrickson

Bob and Jan Lane

Les and Paula Poole

James and Sara Rowen

Mel and Margie Shaw

Frank A. Sprinkle

Tommy Thompson

Opal Tice

Percy and Betty Wetherbee

Don't be left out of the POD! Fill out the form below, cut along the guide lines and mail with your contribution TODAY!

Pay Off the Debt - "POD" - Drive

YES!! I want to put another "pea in the pod":

I WILL BE ONE OF 12:

- ☐ Expect my \$25 on the ____ day of each month.
- ☐ My pledge is good for ____ year(s).
- ☐ Enclosed is my \$300 check for 1 year.

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I WILL BE ONE OF 30:

- ☐ Expect my \$10 on the ____ day of each month.
- ☐ My pledge is good for ____ year(s).
- ☐ Enclosed is my \$120 check for 1 year.

City, State, Zip: _____

I'll make a one-time, 5-year contribution:

- ☐ Enclosed is my check for \$1500.

Mail to:

Josephine County Historical Society
512 SW 5th Street
Grants Pass, OR 97526

In Tribute of

*The Board of the JCHS is saddened by the
death of Honorary Member*

Dorothy Fairchild Francis

(June 1917 - February 1999)

An active and enthusiastic participant in the Society for many years, Dorothy wrote many articles and poems, including this one:

FULL CYCLE

The seeds of faith
grow into
the buds of hope
that blossom into
the flowers of love
from whence the seeds came.

We all shall miss Dorothy.

*The Josephine County Historical Society is grateful
to the following members whose donations were
received to help with the Society's general operating
expenses.*

Richard and Charlene Blevins
Tom and Pat Bristol
Bob Lane
Jean Malone
Douglas and Bonnie McGregor
John E. Voorhies

In memory of...
Edna May Hill
a generous contribution from
K. Stanley Martin

JCHS depends on the generosity of its members.

*Please take a moment to consider how much your
contribution can assist the Society in providing
programs to the community while ensuring the
Society's continued success.*

*Won't you please consider a gift to the
Society?*

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